

Seattle City Council

Neighborhoods, Arts, & Civil Rights Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2 PM, May 13th, 2003

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Christopher J. Jarmick**

Today's Words' Worth poet is **Paul Nelson**

Paul Nelson is a broadcast interview host, whole-systems journalist, teacher and poet. Founder of ***It Plays in Peoria Productions*** and Co-founder of Auburn, Washington's ***SPLAB! - The Northwest Spokenword LAB***, Paul has been a broadcaster for 22 years, hosts *Saturday Jazz Matinee* on KPLU, 88.5FM (NPR), has interviewed hundreds of authors, poets, activists & whole-system theorists for his regionally-syndicated public affairs radio program & is father of a twelve year old Rebecca Rose.

Song of Our Selves

By Paul Nelson

(For John Lennon, Ed Sanders, Vicky Edmonds, Beaver Chief & Michael McClure.)

Our natural desire is to sing.
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The roar of the Rebel Lion.
Growl of the Labrador.
Coltrane's tenor wail.

Lady Day's moan piercing
smoke, pain & smack.

Drip of the faucet in steel sink.
Reincarnation of Lakshmi, burning
a trail of Nag Champa fortelling
fortunes. Heated Drambuie vapor
rising into an unsuspecting nasal cavity.
Your fingers grazing
the base of my spine.

This all gravity of human desire
hot as the noon day sun
on Venus.

Moving with the pressure of entropy,
the young man sings.

Sudden as the velocity of Indy,
teacher goddess forges new paths
through blizzards of pain
and denial of incest, and sings.

Up though paternal ridicule
the poet shaman sings.

With the power of water
slicing patiently though rock,
tenacious as indigenous growth
popping through cracks in city skin
the song takes root and wails.

Our natural desire is to sing.

Monk's fat fingers - no compromise -
make ivories sing. Zappa's
torrid instrumental genius
meets stratocaster strings, and sings.
Miles' muted roar, into the centuries
it sings.

Deny us your song - betray your soul.
Defy gravity and postpone experiments
in Buddha-hood for another spin
on the karmic wheel, but YOU WILL SING.

Moon rise - Little Sister spits ash -
coyote steals and eats Yuma God heart,
you sing. Bullet fells a Beatle

Yet we imagine no religion
we Give Him Some Truth
we Give Peace a Chance
and we sing.

Jails can't contain the spirit of a shaman.
The planet spins, we hear the ancient
Dreamer's Song and we sing.

We fight narcotic vapors
We breathe in polluted stench
of greed's by-product
& belch a steel guitar sermon.
Blues our alchemical urge.
Our dirge. We sing.

We burn in the ovens of Auschwitz
return as spirits and sing.

We meet the business end
of America's Smart Bombs
we persevere and
sing.

Vaporized in a Nagasaki instant
yet into the generations our song
is heard.

The dogs of racism are released,
we overcome and with lusty
voice we wail our
eternal song
make
ripples in the
universal pond, each tiny
wave a note in our divine number.

We plot in the rebel café
a new form of thinking
of being of living.
An end to suffering.

We drop the steel,
call off the revolution
begin to feel
the evolution
of sentient beings, and sing.

Our termination of desire
manifests as fire of
the Ancient Soul unbound,
we lift off the ground

AND WE SING!

-- *END* --